



H1N1 Provider Briefing

Date: October 14, 2009
To: All Healthcare Providers
From: Director of Health, David R. Gifford, MD, MPH
Re: Information on H1N1 in Rhode Island

Local Influenza Activity Level: Regional¹, H1N1 predominant circulating strain

Rhode Island²: 3 hospitalized cases, 0 deaths

National Report³: 16,258 hospitalized cases, 1,784 deaths

Sentinel Surveillance (% of visits due to influenza-like illness)⁴: Rhode Island: 2.6%, New England Region: 1.3%, Nation: 5.1%

Rhode Island H1N1 vaccine strategy

Rhode Island's H1N1 vaccine strategy focuses on vaccinating pregnant women and children first. This will be accomplished through a combination of school-based clinics for older children and office-based vaccination for younger children and pregnant women. All states have been allocated vaccine according to population and are working under limited early vaccine availability. We are aware that some states have included healthcare workers in their initial efforts, which must consequently delay complete vaccination of pregnant women and children. In Rhode Island, we hope that our approach will help to decrease the spread of H1N1 in the community early in the flu season while simultaneously protecting our most at-risk populations. Healthcare workers will be the focus of an intense vaccination effort in hospital-based clinics as soon as sufficient vaccine becomes available (anticipated by late November to December).

H1N1 vaccine delivery update

14,900 doses of the nasal-spray FluMist vaccine arrived in Rhode Island this week. These doses are currently being shipped to pediatricians and family physicians and will be used to vaccinate children 2 through 5 years of age.

Relenza Inhalation Powder

GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) and the FDA notified healthcare professionals of the death of an influenza patient who received Relenza (zanamivir) Inhalation Powder which was solubilized and administered by mechanical ventilation. Relenza Inhalation Powder is not intended to be reconstituted in any liquid formulation and is not recommended for use in any nebulizer or mechanical ventilator. Relenza Inhalation Powder should only be used as directed in the prescribing information by using the Diskhaler device provided with the drug product. For more information, see the MedWatch safety summary at <http://www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch/SafetyInformation/SafetyAlertsforHumanMedicalProducts/ucm186081.htm>.

Four new pharmacies distributing free Tamiflu to uninsured patients

Rhode Island Rite Aid, CVS, and Stop & Shop pharmacies are now ready to fill Tamiflu prescriptions for uninsured patients. The following independent pharmacies are now filling these prescriptions as well: Newport

¹ Rhode Island reported Regional activity for the week of October 4 to October 10, 2009. Influenza is circulating in 2 regions of the state. For details see <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/surveillance/>.

² Influenza-associated hospitalizations and deaths since September 1, 2009

³ Influenza and pneumonia-associated hospitalizations and deaths from August 30 to October 3, 2009

⁴ Influenza-like illness activity from September 27 to October 3, 2009

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Prescription Center (289 Broadway, Newport); Phred's Drug (1300 Oaklawn Ave., Cranston); East Side Prescription Center (632 Hope St., Providence); and Oxnard Pharmacy (198 Buttonwoods Ave., Warwick). Providers are reminded to indicate "state supply" on the face of prescription scripts for uninsured patients. No additional voucher from HEALTH is needed.

Prescribing antiviral medications

Patients with severe or progressive illness should be treated with antiviral medications. Clinicians should not feel bound by older recommendations regarding not initiating antiviral treatment beyond 48 hours after initial symptoms. Providers should use clinical judgment and make dosing decisions on an individualized basis.

Billing for H1N1 vaccine administration

Insurers are prepared to receive bills and to pay for the administration of the H1N1 vaccine. H1N1 vaccine providers should contact their individual insurers to obtain billing codes and instructions.

Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System (VAERS)

You can help monitor the safety of vaccines by promptly and accurately reporting any clinically significant adverse event that occurs following vaccination to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Vaccinated patients or their caregivers are encouraged to seek the help of their health care provider in filling out a VAERS form. Please report clinically significant adverse events after vaccination, whether or not the vaccine was administered in your practice, and even if you are not sure if the vaccine caused the adverse event. For more information about reporting VAERS, including instructions for downloading and submitting forms, see http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu/vaccination/statelocal/letter_template_HCP.htm.

H1N1 influenza testing approval for outpatient pregnant women with ILI

Instructions for obtaining approval for H1N1 influenza testing at the HEALTH laboratory for outpatient pregnant women with influenza-like illness (ILI) are available on HEALTH's website at <http://www.health.ri.gov/news/H1N1Advisories/ApprovalProcessForTestingAtTheHealthLaboratoryForOutpatientPregnantWomenWithInfluenzaLikeIllness.pdf>.

H1N1 Vaccine Information Statements available online

H1N1 Vaccine Information Statements (VISs) are now available online in English and in multiple languages. Providers must distribute the appropriate VIS to patients prior to vaccination. To download and print the inactivated H1N1 VISs, see http://www.immunize.org/vis/vis_h1n1inactive.asp. To download and print the live intranasal H1N1 VIS, see http://www.immunize.org/vis/vis_h1n1live.asp.

Printable H1N1 materials available on HEALTH's website

Interested providers can download and print a variety of educational materials about seasonal and H1N1 flu from HEALTH's website. To view flu prevention posters and brochures, see <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/prevention/>. To view flu materials in other languages, see <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/languages/>. A variety of targeted materials are also available on HEALTH's flu pages for pregnant women, parents and caregivers, and people at risk of flu-related complications. Providers should check these pages frequently, as HEALTH will continue to link to resources as they become available.

Resources

- HEALTH at <http://www.health.ri.gov>; <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/for/providers>
- Archived provider briefings and regular news updates: <http://www.health.ri.gov/news/flu/>
- H1N1 Information Line (M-F 8:30am- 4:30pm) 401-222-8022
- H1N1 email address h1n1@health.ri.gov
- <http://www.flu.gov>

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